

Purity and craftiness

By Irving Howe

JAMES ATLAS:
Delmore Schwartz: The Life of an American Poet
 418pp. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. \$15.
DELMORE SCHWARTZ:
What is to be Given
 Introduction by Douglas Dunn
 75pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £2.90.

Only half a year has passed since James Atlas's biography of Delmore Schwartz appeared in the United States, yet one can detect signs of a shift in critical response. Fascination with the life of this New York Jewish writer who spent from early success to a pitiful, sleazy end has given way to impatience with his story and some depreciation of his work. Right now American culture is wide open to varieties of sentimentalism, and these, alas, Schwartz's story can yield. But our culture is very uneasy with intellectual exaltation, romantic fury, high literary yearning, and since these were also present in Schwartz's career, it was only to be expected that a somewhat sour reaction would set in.

All of this may involve no more than honest differences of taste. The slyly clever stories that Schwartz wrote, as well as his rueful, contemplative poems, can leave some readers cold. These stories and poems are associated by the New York Intellectuals from 1937 to, say, 1960, an influence deriving from a special blend of opinion and sensibility: anti-Stalinist, left, high-brow, freewheeling cosmopolitan, unselfishly Jewish. All in all, this adds up to a pretty stiff dose of certain kinds of American literary people. Especially stiff for the academic traditionalists straining for Anglo-Saxon redskins and the anti-academic radicals declaring themselves just folks. The New York sensibility had its moment, and that moment is over.

Delmore Schwartz had the further, and greater, misfortune to become a legend in his own lifetime. He became "Delmore", a persona melded out of intellectual

brilliance and needful vanity. He carried this public face wherever he went, sometimes with a wistful self-indulgence, but at his best with a sweet comic embarrassment in self-deception, regarding his cultural sources, his literary role, his large, awkward body is one of the persistent motifs in his work. One of his best poems deals wittily with this motif, transforming physical bulk into psychic shadow.

The heavy bear who goes with me, A manifold honey to smear his face, Chumsy and lumbering here and there, The central ton of every place...

Contemporary poets such as Robert Lowell and John Berryman made Schwartz into a larger-than-life presence in their work: the unrepentant Delmore, forlorn child of the city, nervous, brilliant, loquacious, helpless: their Jewish affection, this image lent itself to easy ridicule, and even before Schwartz's death eager candidates presented themselves for the job. Besides, people get tired of suffering, and here was a writer, seemingly endowed with every advantage, who suffered inordinately. Who could understand it? Who bear it? Better consign him to the bin of the "minor" and be done.

Finally there was the now-aging generation of Schwartz's friends who invested heavily, if with mixed feelings, in his career. When his remarkable story "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities" first appeared in the *Partisan Review* forty-one years ago, they read it with delight, persuaded that no previous American writer had caught so well the emotional costs of immigrant Jewish life. The wordless griefs that the second generation felt about parents with whom its ties had been cut seemed to come pouring out in this story about a delusional courtship—and pouring out as art, not mere outcry.

For a few years Schwartz's career glided with the elation of success. He became famous for his hunching, crudely impassioned flow of speech, bringing together mother wit from unceasing sources and literary sophistication from European capitals. But then, about mid-way, there began a ghastly decline until at fifty-three, paranoid and desti-

tute, he died in a fleabag hotel near Times Square. In his later years Schwartz seems to have carried a heavy weight of shame, perhaps out of a sense that he had misused his talent ("what have you done with the gift of consciousness?"). He soon became part of the mythology of a literary-intellectual generation, and naturally enough, once the next generation came along, it did not hesitate to stress that the myth had partly been based on misapprehensions. This was a fate Schwartz had foreseen. "No reputation," he told Berryman, "is more than a snowfall."

James Atlas has immersed himself in the little world of Jewish life. He speaks comfortably about "Delmore", provoking in no desire, no doubt perverse, to speak of Schwartz. But about this with tact and feeling, so perhaps he has earned his familiarity. The best thing about his book is that he comes bearing no theories, neither blinkered psychology nor prefabricated sociology, to "explain" the writer's collapse. The story emerges on its own terms, and we must make of it what we can. There is finally not much that we can make of it, except to marvel at the resourcefulness of the human urge to disaster.

The family into which Schwartz was born seems painfully close to the manic extravaganza of *Hunger* and *The Gift*, the Saul Bellow novel which even its admirers had not suspected of close realism. Delmore was a champion son that if he left her her darling son that "come home in a coffin" as well. Delmore was famous, however, she sent him a cloying letter about his work: "If there is another word, how wonderful I don't know..." The father, Delmore remembered, was "a tall, powerful-looking hand, some man who looked at others as if he owned the world."

Looking back, Delmore himself could never marry. When Delmore was six, his parents' work him one high asking that he choose between them. After they separated, his father offered to buy "Delmore" for \$75,000 (in the reasonable price at the time). Upon the father's death the expected million-dollar legacy dwindled to petty cash.

Now comes the familiar but still astonishing story of a precocious Jewish boy. At seventeen Delmore is studying Pound's verse with a professional eye; two or three years later he is reviewing Joyce and Eliot. In college he makes himself a Gatsby-like list of resolutions: "(1) To read a page of the dictionary every day. (2) To read a chapter in 'Logic' (Aristotle) every day. (3) To tell no lies. (4) To be pure of insincerity, laziness, anger, procrastination... etc., etc." On his nineteenth birthday, alarmed at not yet having composed a masterpiece, he resolves "to work all the time to be great." What makes these juvenile solemnities forgivable is that young Delmore was already entwined in a passion for poetry, "the most sublime thing in the universe." Even this passion he could treat with self-loathing.

We all grew up with Romance in our heads. The Romance that the success Was genius, blazing gifts lighting the world...

Schwartz's literary ambitions, like the ambitions of an entire immigrant generation, brought together purity and craftiness, a love for the pure self and an eye for the main chance. In his earlier years it seemed as if these desires would all be realized. A stream of poems, stories, essays came from his pen; influential poets like Wallace Tate praised him; he joined the editorial staff of *Partisan Review*. Schwartz was especially valued in the New York literary milieu because he was a poet, for while we had plenty of critics, theorists and talkers, we were decidedly short on poetic talent.

His career at this point is nicely described by Mr. Atlas: "Where Jewish [American] writers like Clifford Odets, Daniel Fuchs and Henry Roth had confronted their experience directly, Delmore turned his imaginative power into the cosmopolitan world of letters... Faintly Marxist, imbued with a sense of history, fatal flaws... on the verge of World War II, Delmore was 'the poet of the historical moment' quite

as Auden was in England. He was as if the self-conscious intelligentsia with which he allied himself required a man to dramatize its dilemmas. The writer Dwight Macdonald close to Schwartz (and who admits a personal impression) recalls now an incident which seems to speak of his fate. In a sandy way he once told me that people like myself, committed to order and rationality, could not understand people like him. This wasn't a matter of bad faith, it was a gap beyond bridging. Since we didn't have to be thought deficient in the grips of modern alienation, he hotly denied this. 'Do you ever think what it means to be repelled by a quiet seriousness?' he asked. 'In the morning and not even he could tumble, a strange something left to say.'

The paranoid symptoms began to multiply. That peculiar logic of paranoia, according to which the most likely candidate is assigned the role of central enemy, led Schwartz to torment a harmless shadowing over him. He wrote that she had been planning to go off with writers. "All these fine friends, dodging into buildings and getting during the last halcyon days to avoid a meeting. Those who wrote to his publisher, the faithful art-theorist Meyer, are going to be terrified through to him. Writing became more and more difficult, though in the 1930s and 1960s he did publish some tremendous stories and rhapsodies breaking up his depression overtook him. He gave to become dependent on stimulants, alcohol, mimes, and he felt humiliated. He could not bear the reality of defeat.

It did not. By the 1930s and 1960s he did publish some tremendous stories and rhapsodies breaking up his depression overtook him. He gave to become dependent on stimulants, alcohol, mimes, and he felt humiliated. He could not bear the reality of defeat. He had reviews of his admirers. One wonders, probably to no writers experience one of his purely personal, the result of flow of memory has diminished. Schwartz was also a victim of those familiar lures and corruptions which beset writers in our time. Both, no doubt; but in what proportions?

When I first became friendly with Schwartz, in the very late 1930s, he was in one of his moods. There is a non-sense view on part-time jobs which he would argue that if or so he said, as more money can withstand the temptations (behind this there remains a question of money, fame, publicity, the insecurity of his writings, the seasons of unbending rectitude. In enough money he advanced, we may be certain, by substance, universities were seasons of unbending rectitude. Clearly no troubles in his career starting to be "excesses" account for the extremity of his practical aspects of his breakdown; that must publishers, contracts, deals have been the result of some deep ideas, reviews, floundering. But I find myself thinking often like to conduct themselves of how treacherously exciting it they are small business was for Delmore when all the doors Schwartz took a self-mocking American culture seemed to be

opening for him, a boy from Brooklyn, his best being a war when it seemed that the world was yielding up its goods for the more orderly, how hard it must have been to keep in mind those moral contours with which a sophisticated writer expert in the long history of literary self-hypnotism came, to such encounters. Without endorsing the lurid cultural legend that reduces writers to mere victims of success, I think it would be foolish to deny that Schwartz was partly trapped by the very culture that had created him. A stronger man could have wrenched himself out of that trap and moved past the usual disasters accompanying fame and success. A healthier man might have risen above the fear that he had exhausted his narrow talent and worked fruitfully within its boundaries.

What remains? A small body of work, not the sort that even intense admirers would claim to be "major," yet rich in the flavours of New York life, marked by a strong ironic intelligence, and in its sum making a difference in one's perception of things.

There are five or six first-rate stories, notably "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities" (in *American*), "America" (in *The Child*), "The Menning of This Life". These deal with the comic pathos and hopelessness of the conflict between immigrant families and the assimilated children and the occasional recognition by the latter that they have left behind not only ghetto parochialism but a culture of value. Very depressed, insidiously ratiocinative, these stories have little visible plot but much entanglement of character, stylized dialogue replacing action, a major dependence on passages of commentary, deflated epigrams, and skittish ventures into moral rhetoric. There is a strong awareness of the sheer foolishness of human affairs, the radical ineptitude of our being, such as reminds one of a bit of Dostoevsky's use of buffoonery. But there is also something rare in contemporary writing, and that is a spiritual goodness and nobility—perhaps an echo of immigrant voices.

As for the poems, English readers have a better chance to judge for themselves. Douglas Dunn has edited a small selection, well chosen and sympathetically introduced. There are such famous or once-famous poems as "The Ballad of the Children of the Court", "In the Naked Bed, in Plato's Cave", "For One Who Would Take Life in his Hands". The note of the sen-

ility in Schwartz's verse seems, upon re-reading, stronger than I had remembered, but it is flecked with humour, played with modesty. At their best, these poems are both serious and funny on a high level of intellectual and emotional balance, bringing together declamation, lyric impulse, and bits of vaudeville.

Mr. Dunn writes well about them, and the fact that he fails to mention the Jewish component in Schwartz's sensibility strikes an American as innocent to the point of charm. I'm especially glad that he says a good word for one of Schwartz's last poems, "Sunday Afternoon Along the Seine", a rhapsodic gloss on a famous lecture by Meyer Schapiro. Celebrating the "holiness of all the little things"—and this was the recognition to which Schwartz came—this strangely awkward and beautiful poem, in long loping lines apparently indifferent to formal proprieties, also contains a touching personal note:

Far and near, close and far away Can we not hear, if we but listen To what Flaubert tried to say, Beholding a husband, wife and child On just such a day: *Il s'en va dans le vent!* They are with the truth, they have found the way The kingdom of heaven on earth on Sunday summer day. Is it not clear and clearer? Can we not also hear The voice of Kafka, forever sad, In despair's sickness trying to say: 'Flaubert was right: *Il s'en va dans le vent!* Without forbears, without marriage, without heirs, Yet with a wild longing for forbears, marriage, and heirs: They all stretch out their hands to me: but they are too far away!

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The dissident guitar

By Philip Brady

WOLF BIERMANN:
Poems and Ballads
 Translated by Steve Goch
 103pp. Pluto Press. £5 (paperback), £1.50.

In November 1976 the West German magazine *Der Spiegel* reprinted a cartoon from a Munich newspaper: a soldier in a trench, looking out at the Berlin Wall stood a figure armed with two machine-guns; with the one gun he kept inside a huge crowd of people, and with the other he kept outside a solitary figure waiting to get in. That figure, his guitar slung over his shoulder, was Wolf Biermann, refused re-entry into East Germany and deprived of his citizenship. Little more than a year later *Der Spiegel*, surveying recent, dramatic developments in East Germany, hinted at a certain bafflement in the title of its cover-article: "What is happening in the GDR?" The two events are connected—Biermann's exclusion can now be seen as the first stirring of what he himself, in an early interview, had expressly dreaded, an avalanche of expulsions. But—hence *Der Spiegel's* article—silence has not fallen. While the dissident writers catch their breath, as it were, other critical, if less stylish, voices have been heard, sensationally close, it seems, to the centres of Party power.

What, one wonders, as the plot thickens, will happen to the solitary figure with his guitar? Would the

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Initials Of The Dead

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The granddaddies carved their initials on these trees Entering the beech-wood as you'd enter a pipe organ, Neat harmonic rungs, and on the pillars Entwined initials like a hall of fame, A Cenotaph of living wood. The initials Grew with the trees, we tip-toed past Gravestones a hundred feet tall, and now the breeze Works the pipes and pedals and can't find the time And great letters bend towards us, softly moaning.

Peter Redgrove

The mechanics of the thing

By Richard Mayne

JAY LEYDA (Editor):
Voices of Film Experience
1894 to the Present
580pp. Macmillan. £14.95.

Hear the thoughts of film-makers on film-making. Woody Allen: "You're constantly dealing with catastrophes." Michelangelo Antonioni: "One can almost trick an actor by demanding one thing and obtaining another." Alexander Astruc: "A film in color must be ten times more carefully planned than one in black and white." Ingmar Bergman: "Do you know what movie-making is? Eight hours of hard work each day to get three minutes of film." Pudgy Chayefsky: "An art film must be low-budget, and low-budget means you sacrifice some art." Jean Cocteau: "Everybody who works on a film knows the awful and implacable responsibility which settles on a director and forces him to hide his own doubts and overcome his own weaknesses." Howard Hawks: "Some of Burt's best lines in *To Have and Have Not* don't match her lips at all, because I thought of them after the picture was all over." Henry Javorsky: "Either you are crazy in this business or you don't get anything done." Walter Lasker: "Limitations act as a good discipline. You are stimulated to work in a different way and you get a different look to the picture." Rouben Mamoulian: "You have no idea how cumbersome the sound and camera equipment was in the beginning. It was like walking around with a bungalow on your back."

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lects and listens to music, he has certain valid notions about his part in the picture. Dudley Nicholas: "The great actors of the stage are actors; of the screen, reactors." Pier-Paolo Pasolini: "One of the least appetizing things of the past few years are precisely those fictional political films, which are films of half-truths, of reality-unreality, of consultation and of falseness." Ivan Passer: "Actors often don't know who they are, the directors take themselves too seriously; they are too solemn." Paul Rotha: "The most disorienting thing is the number of marvellous shots one sees but cannot get." Ken Russell: "In most of my films I try to do the physically difficult bit first, because it breaks down any preconceived notion the actors may have about his or her selfless self-importance." Jacques Tati: "Comedians speak with their legs." Robert Taylor: "Walk down Sunset Boulevard today, and most of the stars look like bums. There's no glamour any more." Ingrid Thulin: "What I wanted to show was the strongest fear people in Scandinavia have: they are frightened of dying inside themselves."

Gregg Toland: "One reason for many of the effects [in *Citizen Kane*] was a lack of money." Orson Welles: "I regard the whole bug of tricks of the cinema as being so petty and so simple and so interesting essentially—it's what a film says and its real, its real cinematic style and plasticity. When something is reduced to a mere technicality, it becomes a subject to a theatrical evaluation." Billy Wilder: "I'd go in and kind of dirty up the sets a little bit and make them look worn.... Everything in Hollywood always looks like the late Jayne Mansfield's bedroom, and it's ridiculous." Franco Zeffirelli: "I think I have a method, which is very flexible, of catching the actors and letting them go free. It is a combination of the two. You must be as tough as rubber and as soft as steel."

That, in miniature, is a digest of Jay Leyda's monumental book—actors, cameramen, composers, directors, scriptwriters, all arranged in alphabetical order, with excerpts from interviews, letters, diaries, reviews, newspaper, journal, periodicals, radio and television shows, compilers of books like Kevin Brownlow's *The Parade's Gone By*. At times the subjects' own books and articles are included for useful testimony; but most of the sources are spoken words. The result is lively; and the alphabetical arrangement throws up some odd juxtapositions, as in the telescoped

A sense of the holy

By Bruce Stewart

RONALD HOLLOWAY:
Beyond the Image
Approaches to the Religious
Dimension in the Cinema
215pp. Geneva: World Council of Churches. Sw fr 25.50.

It is consoling when the author of a book with such a subtitle can devote an entire chapter to Charlie Chaplin, seeing in the "anti-clerical" little tramp "Christ the pious by the world, but getting his means of food. It is also reassuring when a writer on films corroborates one's own view of the work of a film-maker like Robert Flaherty, the holy. I first saw *Nanook of the North* some twenty years after it was made, as a second feature in some forgotten cinema. It was heavily cut and had had a all that it was a now and fairly in later years that I identified the experience not unlike that of

For the rest, Ronald Holloway, who works in collaboration with the films and visual arts section of the World Council of Churches and has written this book with the aid of a research group from the

version above. For anyone interested in the mechanics of movie-making, this is a huge and handy compilation, for which due credit must go to its researchers, Doug Tomlinson and John Hagan, as well as to Professor Leyda himself.

When I opened it, I must confess that it struck me as a weird piece of bookmaking—some 550 pages of rather small print, with American spelling and no illustrations. A book to dip into, surely, rather than read. Perhaps, but reading it changed my mind. As voice succeeded voice, a teen-age montage developed, building a multi-angled view of how films are made: some of the most fascinating accounts are of features that never got off the ground in places, unavoidably, it was maddening; a fine talker like Welles or Tati would have to be cut off in full technical witness, and some total omissions were hard to understand. Why Vittorio De Sica without his



Sidney Greenstreet and Alexis Smith in *The Woman in White* (Peter Godfrey, 1948), and Errol Flynn with Yvonne Furness in *The Master of Ballintrae* (William Kellogg, 1953). From Volume 2. Meyer's enthusiastic Warner Brothers Director (361pp. New York: Arlington House, £20).

Rockefeller Foundation, would seem to distinguish two main streams of religious dimension in the cinema: one that could be called orthodox, flowing out of religion as it exists in the real world, and another, deeper-running and less obvious, sometimes not perceived as religious at all, and which cinema sometimes achieves, perhaps in spite of itself.

The orthodox stream has tended to burst its banks and cause wounding. The dream cult established by Hollywood was in fact with ornate and resplendent theatres for cathedrals, and stars both heavy church-going and enthusiastic cinema attendance, it was ready to bow or genuflect before audiences prostrated themselves in the same way when an image of Lord Rama or Krishna appeared on the screen.

All this created fertile ground for the epic biblicals and supple "priest" films ("god" films in India), which in the event did little good for the last thing wholesome cinema makes for is Decency. The Legion of Decency, which was an American attempt to force films, finally and forever because similar bodies elsewhere in the world thoughtlessly poisoned the wells in the 1930s, the later. The writing is as clear as day.

The news as drama

By Paul Smith

REINHOLD FELDING:
The March of Time, 1935-1951
pp. Oxford University Press.

substantial and his much-needed factual narrative corrects some of the earlier editions which have become outdated in standard content and editing. In standard content and editing, notably the idea that *The March of Time* was the "most important" of all newsreels, it is not surprising that it has been largely forgotten. It was, in fact, the pre-war newsreels under attack for not tackling controversial issues, and today's television news programmes are either failing to achieve balance or, in the case of the BBC, are being criticised for not being more radical in their pursuit of it. It is stimulating to be reminded of a form of impartial being very different from the color and lack of balance and thought of today's newsreels. It was, in fact, a team and not a man. The *March of Time* was a screen development could work with a Time line to promote Time magazine, and its style showed the influence of the magazine. It was, in fact, a team and not a man. The *March of Time* was a screen development could work with a Time line to promote Time magazine, and its style showed the influence of the magazine.

What emerges as a portrait rather than merely a book, never fails. But the two features which human chemistry distinguished it from the newsreels were its copious use of actual footage and its use of reenactments. The *March of Time* was a screen development could work with a Time line to promote Time magazine, and its style showed the influence of the magazine.

Controversial in method, *The March of Time* was equally so in its content. It was, in fact, a team and not a man. The *March of Time* was a screen development could work with a Time line to promote Time magazine, and its style showed the influence of the magazine.

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A perishing parish

By Anne Stevenson

DAVID PLANT: The Family 301pp. Gollancz. £5.60.

The jacket of David Plant's sixth novel, *The Family*, tells us that the author "has found in his native American background a rich setting for a story told with great simplicity and force, and with stunning emotional truth". Well, yes. Except that the "story", for all its emotional truth, is not really a story but a meticulous laying bare of what must be raw experience. If it were a piece of fiction, the ghost of a myth would be hanging around it: Joseph and his brothers, perhaps, or some North American Indian myth of family loyalty. Had it been the other hand, mere "material" for a craftsman such as Somerset Maugham or Chekhov, or Maupassant, more air would have flowed between the narrative and the reader. This is not to suggest that *The Family* is self-indulgent, but that it is a novel (or so it seems to this reader) that had to be written

to get a part of his past off the writer's chest. If the emotional urgency of *The Family* should turn out not to be true in a more than literary sense, then David Plant is a very good pretender. For in this extended Canadian family living in Rhode Island, Daniel, the next-to-last of seven sons, is the only character with whom we empathize as well as sympathize. Daniel's mind is, we suppose, the author's; and it is follow as it widens into an understanding of the complicated yet narrow relationship between his father, Jim Francour, and his mother, Rebecca, and his difficult love and need for independence of their sons.

All family situations tend to be claustrophobic, but this one is especially so, contained as it is within a Catholic French-speaking parish in a Protestant New England city at a time (the late 1950s) when the old-fashioned life of the parish is under threat from the mass-making (or in this case, possibly, mass-breaking) forces of American society. The father, stubborn, uncomprehending, unable to

change the habits of his life or his Republican politics, refuses to cooperate with the union and loves his job. To comfort him his sons club together to buy him the house in the country he has always wanted, but Jim is too emotionally inflexible to enjoy it. Gradually he withdraws, becomes silent. Then one of the sons, a graduate of MIT, marries a Protestant girl from Texas. Jim drives him from the house despite the anguish of Rebecca, for this and other reasons, suffers a nervous breakdown. The sons, each one a distinctive character, struggle to keep the family together but themselves place in the world outside it. As they become at once the sorrowful protectors and the violent accusers of their parents (and themselves) the novel takes on the dimensions of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

Indeed, *The Family* belongs to an established tradition of American writing which includes Thomas Wolfe's *Of Time and the River*, Lily Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and most of the novels of Carson McCullers. David Plant, however, triumphs over the genre, in being neither melodramatic nor sentimental.

The centre cannot hold

By Michael Irwin

STUART EVANS: Centres of Ritual 400pp. Hutchinson. £5.50.

Stuart Evans's new novel ostensibly concerns the efforts of the Highgate Group, a clutch of political MPs, writers and backbenchers, to forge a new alliance of the centre. The narrative occupies very early summer of 1976 and the summer of 1977. There are repeated references to current events of all kinds, but especially to those economic or parliamentary happenings—the IMF loan, for example, the Walsall and Warrington by-elections, the resignation of Reg Prentice—that could have made the title and desirable.

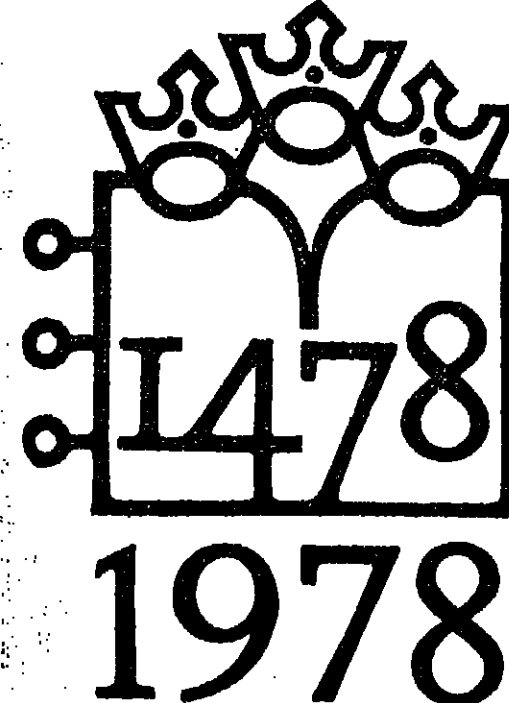
This topicality creates a dilemma for the author: nothing much can happen in his tale at the political level because nothing much did happen. He circumvents the problem ingeniously. The plotting and narrative are scarcely present in the novel itself. In fact there is no direct narrative to speak of. The text is a collage of the conversations, responses and reflections of half a dozen of those connected with the Group. There are excerpts from the journals kept by Roger Ingestrup, an Oxford historian, and Stephen Kent, one of his pupils. Bailey, Labour MP, sends in her about husband, and episodes from a satirical fantasy that Bill Doherty, a novelist, is weaving round the personalities and ambitions of his friends. Other characters are represented through their thoughts or their talk.

The emphasis throughout is on ideas, but what narrative interest is generated comes from sexual rather than political

machinations. Much of the story of *Centres of Ritual* is told through the eyes of the Group. She is a tutor, Roger Ingestrup, a novelist, a writer, a backbench MP. Between the evasiveness of the novel and the while her husband, she is a serene political figure. The strength of the Group are that in terms of sexual morality, private conversations, the measure of political crisis of the novel.

Stuart Evans is a very difficult man to talk and though he is to hold the reader's attention to be continually talking or acting. It is the dialogue or the will lapse into a moment of familiar routine. "And there was a Tony was, as usual, and clear-headed, ghastly," he said. "Environmentalists do is to balance a horror against a beneficial result. It needed sources of a but more challenging, spoken indignation or foreigner, which a sensible conversation, a literary idiom. In this, a man cries 'Tony strikes home. Some of the offers of the satire without the This is particularly true, grime of Augustus' which is clogged, though, by the language.

In general the language is that the novel is a search of a mode to mix. The *Centres of Ritual* have been produced by a mixture of a day's affairs and a committed, examined with a enough imaginative life. It is a work of real life, this is what it is. The author's talent and his would seem to point to a conversation-piece, should aim at a level of somewhere between a serious text and the strange Augustus. The very also be the case the politics are not currently ing theme either in contemplation or for what. This, it seems, ensures both a long education and a gruffly amusing tale.



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Good fad guide

By John Ryle

CYRA McFADDEN: The Serial 111pp. Picador. £2.50.

The Serial is an everyday story of county folk, told in fifty-two weekly episodes in the *Pacific Sun*. The county is a fashionable suburb of San Francisco, upwardly mobile Kate and Harvey Holroyd are an escrow officer at the Wells Fargo Bank, she is into macramé—in the hills where they are busy assimilating the hip-dillos and lippy argot of county society. Maria, they discover, is "this whole high energy trip with all these happening people". A good deal of the energy seems to go into maintaining a cold-war lifestyle, "saying mellow", "hanging loose" and "getting clear" (*The Serial* it should be said, is satirical). But when Kate starts getting her head together body-consciousness-wise, things in the Holroyd household begin to go awry.

She decides to take a lover ("the question was whose") and her choice falls on Leonard, a psychologist specializing in "the dysfunctionality" of the dysfunctionality (there's a lot of that in Maria). Actually Leonard turns out to be a bum trip for Kate, but meanwhile Harvey has been getting on with his secretary, his Murnings, separations and reparations (the story comes to an end, but things say much the same. Cyra McFadden has caught the authentic rhythm of the max and suspense of the instalment plan—and her pastiche of modish West Coast speech patterns is swift and dandy. But California can outdo real-life craziness in the sunshine state (compare the fictionalized martyrdoms in *The Love of One* with Jessica Mitford's *Ways of Death*). Ms McFadden needs inventing nothing to reveal the follies of fashionable psychobabble.

Deeply involved in the Human Potentials movement, she had through Carl Jung, Silva Mind Control, autogenic analytical Lifestyling, positivist integration, the Fisher-Hoffman process, massage, ergonomics, palmistry, neo-Reichian bodywork and Feldenkrais functional integration. They are all real even the impossible Feldenkrais (to the extent that they were devised by other minds than Ms McFadden's). In this respect *The Serial* is a useful ethnographic record, a mock etiquette book for the latest youth culture in the world, where you can't be too thin or too rich.

an account of changing modes of speech which could be a valuable source of citations for the editor of the OED supplement, though the tale is a stale cocktail of social science (and derives from the superannuated in-joke of Blacks, gays and junkies. When the denizens of Marin County read, which they do in their psychotherapists' waiting rooms, they read *The Serial* like *Harper's* ("I ate didn't actually jog yet, but she was reading *The Ultimate Athlete*").

The Serial itself comes spirals-bound, like a textbook or an instruction manual. This anomaly corresponds to its position in a culture where the representation of everyday life is left more and more to soap operas, sociology, serials and strip-cartoons and where the sensibility represented in the first while novel of manners is still in search of a place to pitch its tent. The point-of-view portage one such vantage. Whether a satirical stake-out on a low-rent genre like *Harper's* can provide another is questionable when it participates in the vices it excorates to such an extent that the only people in a position to appreciate its full range are Marin County dwellers and their therapists' waiting rooms.

The uses of adversity

By Susan Clapp

G. M. T. PARSONS: Laura 159pp. Deutsch. £3.50.

G. M. T. Parsons was born in 1896. Her first novel, *The Love Pursues*, was published in 1933; her second, *Laura*, came out in 1950. She was too busy getting on with other things to write the sort of novel that might have been savoured by Jo March. In exploring both daring independence and the kinder virtues, it offers headlines and improvement in equal quantities, mixing moral fable with pointed notions about women's rights and rites. And the combination of placid which the moral lies in the unwinding tale rather than the telling paragraph—could not have been achieved by any of the Little Women.

The date of the novel is indistinct, one of those years in which outbreaks were always threatened by led to disaster; when men and women nearly always stayed at home among governesses and good servants, basket carrying and ailing tenants. There is a kind but stern uncle, a feeble aunt and an irritatingly omnipresent companion. In a novel in which the heroine is orphaned, there are Laura and Nell, and a BO box (in which they save money for benevolent objects), but disagree about their favourite colour: Laura likes pink, Nell blue. On the death of the girl's grandfather, the family move to his large house in Norfolk, which has Here Nell, who is pretty and likes the local game to play croquet and have drawing-room conversations. Laura, who is stark and

willful, becomes involved with an altogether more dangerous yet, headed by a poet and featuring a serious girl with spectacles who goes to college in London.

Laura specializes in fierce enthusiasms and furtive excitements. These range widely. At one moment it is Aristotle's *Poetics* which set her tingling—thrilling of her ears grow hot; at the next it is the exposure of a girl's shocker sister as smooth; her uncle's much-brooded-over accusation that she favours "odd and unusual substances" is allowed some praises "like a fruit", she is pre- pared to dismiss her should the producing something "silly". And bought a piece of independence rises her painting to newly extravagant lengths the paintings are duly snubbed by visitors.

Much attention is paid to the disruption and heartache caused by the domestic sins of ingratitude, incivility and obstinacy. Crossness and feasting are seen to yield guilt, and, most hysterically, a dream in which disaster is brought about by Laura's lack of thought, aly through which winds comfort- ment (writing home is an event; or a suitable painting-piece an episode), larger happenings fall with unspoken passion, dramatic estrangement and fulfilled love are characters enter and suddenly, are dismissive finality. Happiness or unhappiness need seem arbitrary, for they are always firmly tethered to progress, and the stretches of time and events are left unexplored in the interests of pointing the heroine's path starkly, clearly, who untroubled landscapes.

A surreal sampler

By Jane Miller

LEONORA CARRINGTON: The Stone Door 118pp. Routledge. £3.75.

Leonora Carrington's second novel, written more than thirty years ago and announced now by surrealist, virtually obliges its reader to scan like a collage or patchwork its irre- gular stream of truncated narra- tives studied with surprising sim- iles of sometimes. A series of always deliquescent narratives, whose names and provenances are either helpfully vouchsafed or, in the case of the most significant, are reassured by the author's in- all, "true". The dreams and journeys, which are gayer by mysterious meetings or many ghostly, which dissolve like so author is a painter too, and her ducing those startling effects of fantasy, managed when he effects small of a type or blades of grass with an unerring deliberateness to other- worldly landscapes.

It is not a difficult book even to read, for Carrington, what conventionally is a view of time and the fictional characters and it. Threatened through incantations and disor- ganizations, of an English Jewish Hungarian, out, still known to their separate stories, foresees a future where a darkly hinted a blurb mentions the rise to a Hungarian, me in Mexico). The ever, settles on this and of things, to which the ward eye" is invited to contemplation of Carrington's "It is a long, long time for terrify, a field of dilla and three-masted ships in an embrace. Flapping in the carcass of a sea- man, all his wisdom is in the final, a good deal more prettily embroiled some, are very much a banner, for its colour, say, example, and detail and unexplained control, but a masterly sense of design which fashioned and charmingly potent.

1325

The pendular Pitt

By Ian R. Christie

PETER DOUGLAS BROWN:
William Pitt Earl of Chatham
The Great Commoner
418pp. Allen and Unwin. £11.95.

Four clearly separate phases can be distinguished in the political career of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham. One decade as a young political prodigy in the service of a family faction opposed to Sir Robert Walpole was followed by a second—justly described by Peter Douglas Brown as "the one season of his career which can be called ordinary"—as a servant of the Crown among the place-holders of second rank. In the third period he forced his way to the top and became the directing spirit of the most successful war fought by the British in the eighteenth century. The final phase, extending over the last fifteen years up to his death in 1778, was mainly one of frustration and failure, partly due to mental illness and physical decay.

Mr Brown's handling of his theme is in general judicious and enlightening within its limits. Although it stands an admirer of Pitt as the forger of victory in the Seven Years War, this book is far from being a mere piece of hero-worship, and many deserved strictures are delivered. However, the treatment could have been more critical than it has turned out to be. In the main the author has confined himself to updating the context and consideration of Pitt's activities from the recent monographs. Good use of one important manuscript source, the fourth Duke of Devonshire's political diary, has given immediacy to the treatment of the late 1750s. But this apart Mr Brown seems to have eschewed extensive research in the great manuscript collections of the period, which have certainly not been exhausted by the writers on whom he relies; and the table of sources for Pitt's speeches in Basil Williams's classic biography written over sixty years ago, on which he leans, though useful when first drawn up, is far from adequate now.

Pitt as a politician was erratic, ambitious, impulsive, devious, opportunist, and frequently lacking in judgment. The right circumstances—those of war—could channel an enormous drive and energy to fruitful purposes. At other times his nature could lead him into disaster. He was also unlucky: genetic abnormality—apparent in different ways in various members of his family—sometimes engendered bouts of complete physical and mental prostration. While Mr Brown is aware of all this, nevertheless a more penetrating and critical examination of Pitt's activities could have added much more to an appreciation of the complexities and inconsistencies of his conduct and to our understanding of his contemporaries. The assessments of him, what rich ironies there were, for instance, in the circumstances that in 1754 Pitt was (unjustly) abusing the Duke of Newcastle for adopting Tory principles; in 1755 was courting Tory support and performance; in 1756 was arguing, just as he was, for a more (equally unjustly) being accused by Newcastle and the Marquis of Rockingham of committing the same sin by having sold himself to the Earl of Bute and the Princess Dowager of Wales.

Again, it is a pity the reader is not given a taste of the extraordinary correspondence in which Pitt struck a bargain with Bute to share power in the next reign, in the respective posts of Secretary of State and First Lord of the Treasury, as an honest broker to the account of their bickering later. George III came to the throne. Mr Brown records without comment the extraordinary performance of Pitt as the king's minister under George III during the Cabinet secrets to the Prince of Wales, favouring, who had no official standing whatsoever as a government servant. We get no sense of the drama and tension arising out of Pitt's tightrope act in attempting to serve ministerially both the present and the reversionary interest.

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The relationship of these curious circumstances to the claim made for Pitt (and accepted by Mr Brown) that he owed his ministerial position in 1757 to popular acclaim deserves some critical consideration. So also did the basis of the claim, resting on the newspaper reports of the day; for the story that after George III had dismissed Pitt early in 1757 the country "rained gold boxes" upon him was exploded over four years ago in a trenchant article by Paul Langford, who showed that it rested largely on false journalistic assertions.

What we learn about Pitt from this episode is, not that he had an enormous wave of popular sentiment behind him, but that his friends were operating a very active propaganda department in an attempt to militate against the thinking that such a sentiment existed. It was not popular opinion that brought Pitt back into office as a leading figure in the great war ministry of 1757-61; but the balance of forces in the Commons and the sheer necessity of hummering together a government of national unity in the midst of what had so far been a disastrous war.

Mr Brown, like Basil Williams and others, presents Pitt as an indefatigable organizer of victory showering directives upon his subordinates, but his book takes us no further in understanding how the incredibly creaky mid-eighteenth-century war machine operated and the degree to which Pitt was able to screw it up to some moderate level of efficiency. No one had any sense of urgency. As one young scholar wrote, some ten years ago: "When Pitt [in July 1757] decided to discuss some ordinance regulations for the Rochford expedition, the lieutenant general would return to town. There was no implication that he should do so immediately."

The story of how Pitt pushed on to victory against these domestic odds remains to be told. Mr Brown rightly thinks, blames Pitt for his resignation in 1761 when the Cabinet rejected his plan for a pre-emptive strike to forestall a Spanish intervention in the war. But he has been more patient he would have decided over the last brilliantly successful year of hostilities. But there is little doubt that in that time his demands for a Carthaginian peace would have provoked a Cabinet quarrel and his resignation before the end of 1762.

Pitt's biography in general has presented him during his last years as a champion of the rights of American colonists against parliamentary pretensions to impose taxation, but there is no exception. Unfortunately he concludes, pace Dr Langford whose work he has consulted, that in 1766 Pitt "instilled that a complete distinction existed in principle and in law between taxation for the regulation of trade and taxation for revenue". By doing so he lets slip the clue to the labyrinth. Merely when he set against the context of the Stamp Act of 1765 and of the Sugar Act of 1764, the one, imperfect piece of legislation, reporting on which he relies can be seen to contain a fundamental self-contradiction. But when compared with the other considerable evidence available for Pitt's line of argument at this time, it turns out to be clearly corrupt and misleading. Pitt condemned "internal" taxation of America as unconstitutional, but not port duties.

We gain various insights about him from the establishment of this fact. His knowledge of constitutional law was erratic. He could be so politically maladroit that in 1766 he practically wrecked his reputation in the House of Commons and could raise only four supporters for his policy, though he made a good recovery later in the parliamentary session. As head of the ministry formed in July 1766 (when he took a peacetime government) Chatham had no constitutional or practical objections to taxation of America by port duties; the Board of Treasury, headed by his creature, Grafton, had such a policy under consideration for months before Grafton's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Townshend, let slip word of his intentions in the Commons early in 1767. When the colonies in 1770 began to rebel, Chatham's attitude to the colonies in 1770 began to rebel, Chatham's attitude to the colonies in 1770 began to rebel.

record of his speeches collected into *The Parliamentary History*, on which Mr Brown relies heavily at first or second hand. In 1774 Chatham was saying privately that the reports of his speeches of 1766 were false and also that he never went further than declare taxation of America "inexpedient".

This was a direct lie, but it is nevertheless an indication of a change of mood. Then reports of one of Chatham's speeches of May 1774, sent by friends to the second Earl of Hardwicke, indicate a considerable harmony with the government's point of view and include the observation that the ministers seemed "much pleased": on important points these reports are irreconcilable with the version in *The Parliamentary History*. In 1775 Chatham would not have prosecuted for malicious libel the publisher in pamphlet form of a speech in which he was reported to have called for the removal of British troops from Boston. These circumstances arouse the suspicion that, for propaganda purposes, friends of the colonists in London were printing slightly garbled reports of Chatham's speeches, representing him as far more pro-American than he actually was; and the historian who misrepresents Chatham if he accepts these reports as correct.

While interesting for the general reader this book thus has little to offer the specialist; and academics may hesitate to expose students to its inaccuracies which, in some of the references to John Wilkes specifically but also in other connections, display lack of comprehension about the way things happened in the eighteenth century.

Hacks and historians

By Pat Rogers

DONOVAN H. ROND and W. REV. NOLDS McLEOD (Editors):
Newsletters to Newspapers
Eighteenth-Century Journalism
328pp. Morgantown: School of Journalism, West Virginia University. \$10.

The history of journalism is too historical to be left to the journalists, but nobody also much wants the editors to write a sort of political theory and a half-hearted literary analysis. Both schools are represented in this volume, with some contributors earnestly seeking a "free press theory" among New England writers in the 1780s, while others offer rhetorical descriptions of the *Tatler* or *The Conduct of the Allies*. The first group seems a little more convinced of its purposes. Valiantly as the editors have striven to impose a shape on the collection (which is based on a conference held in 1976), their task was made harder by the device of letting alone scholarly inquiry, and makes a thin pretext for their own familiar facts. On the other hand, Susan Henry's account of Benjamin's sister-in-law Ann is informative and attractively presented.

The contents are fairly evenly divided between England and America, with the American group concentrating on the very end of the colonial period and the beginnings of the new nation. A vigorous essay in revisionism by Robert M. Ours deals with James Livingston, the son of Samuel Richardson's friend, Charles Livingston. Mr Ours makes a good case for James, who has been the object of some unfriendly comment for his sentiments during the Revolution. Mr Ours argues that Livingston was genuinely committed to his "unannounced policies" regarding impartiality and freedom of the press. He notes that in November 1775, Livingston's press was destroyed by a group of Sons of Liberty; they later threatened to cut his throat if he continued printing. Just how restricted free speech either by legal sanctions or social pressures is of course a much debated issue. Several of the contributors here take up the problem, most of them seeking to qualify Leonard W. Levy's "legacy of sup-



Polanzani's portrait of Piranesi, 1750, originally the title page of the book. The book, together with an Arts Council exhibition of the artist (at the Hurdwood Gallery from April 27 to June 1), is reviewed in a later issue of the TLS.

HOWARD COLVIN:
Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840
300pp. John Murray. £30.

For nearly twenty-five years Howard Colvin's *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840* has been the bible of architectural writers and historians and looked up to as a model of impeccable scholarship. It is with all the best reference books, to seek in it the answer to the question was to be trapped into discovering the answers to others he had not set out to ask. It was the outcome of the most painstaking investigation of previously untapped sources—unlike the many reference books which, however handy and even indispensable, are compiled from other reference books.

Now Mr Colvin has put us further in his debt with a new volume which is a great deal more than a revised edition of the first. For one thing, he has expanded it to embrace Scotland and Wales; not Ireland, since a consortium of Irish architects is at present engaged, as he explains in his preface, in preparing a dictionary of Irish architecture. Nevertheless Ireland is far from being ignored in this volume. James Gandon, for example, no doubt because he was English-born, has a full-length entry with his distinguished public buildings in Dublin—the Four Courts, the Custom House and the rest—listed, and even Sir Edward Pearce, Ireland's foremost Palladian architect, an Irishman through and through and a member of the Irish Parliament, is included. I suppose because he also designed some buildings in England. Typical of the little-known bits of information that are to be garnered from Mr Colvin's pages is the illuminating one that Pearce's father was first cousin to Sir John Vanbrugh.

A second direction in which the dictionary has been expanded is that its starting date is now 1600 instead of 1660. The latter date was chosen, enough historically since it coincided with the Restoration, and now one more logical architectural date for what account of English architecture can be properly balanced if it fails to include Inigo Jones. The new date takes the book back to the moment when the Italian Lodovico Michelozzi, Renaissance became a discipline applied with understanding of the rules of classical architecture, instead of a mere source of decorative elements.

No date is of course ideal. Mr Colvin is still compelled to leave out Robert Smythson, the architect of some of the greatest Elizabethan houses, Wollaton and Hardwick among others (although his son, John just finds a place); and yet to go back earlier than 1600 would have involved his including a large number of master-masons and masons, carpenters rather than of architects as we know them today. When is an architect not an architect is a question which shall have to return to another context presently.

At the other end of his time-span Mr Colvin has kept to his original limit: 1840. He has added three, in spite of the growing interest in, and greater knowledge of the nineteenth century, because of the extinction of the last, to the other historians, J. Mordaunt and Paul Joyce, are at work on a companion *Dictionary of Victorian Architects*. They are well qualified for the task and their dictionary is something to look forward to, but we will be fortunate indeed if it comes up to the standard of Mr Colvin's.

In the meantime Mr Colvin's volume is a masterpiece of scholarship, as well as of his historical sense. He hangs in the air. He chose, he told us in his earlier dictionary, because the 1830s "saw the extinction of the 'Regency style'"; but this is not wholly so, as Mr Colvin would be the first to agree. Bassevi and Decimus Burton did creep in, but not Penrynthorne, kept for a brief mention in an appendix in the "provinces"—Mr Colvin's forte is mainly architecture in the provinces, and he has employed variants and derivatives of the Regency style until well into the middle of the century. Although the early phases of the style are naturally included, Mr Colvin's is a much more sober, more restrained, more elegant (but not the famous)

By J. M. Richards

Pugin, his terminal date satisfactorily avoids the need for Mr Colvin to embark on the long battle between the Romans and the Goths and the ecclesiastical heresy-hunting of the Camden Society's devotees. These without doubt belong to the Victorian era.

A more difficult problem than the choice of 1840 has posed for Mr Colvin is that he has plunged him right into the middle of the Industrial Revolution, which was responsible for some of the most significant buildings of their time—buildings which introduced into the English landscape structures of a scale and bulk that had hardly been seen since the castles and cathedrals of the Middle Ages. Mr Colvin would be justified in saying that he is not concerned with engineers and their works but with architects; and where does one begin and the other end, especially in the early nineteenth century when the challenge of new demands and technologies inspired the engineers to flights of the imagination which took them beyond the utilitarian into what we are entitled to see as architecture? The relationship in practice between engineer and architect is paralleled by that between master-builder and architect 300 years earlier, which have been overheard of. This is the fruit of many years of searching in the muniment rooms of remote country houses and among records and archives stored away in all parts of the country. In the preface to this new edition he acknowledges the help he has obtained, since the first edition was published, from the cataloguing of the drawings in the RIBA's possession and from the completion of the *Building of England*, but the research required by the task of revision—leaving aside this volume's expanded coverage—must still have been prodigious.

To have the designers of so many buildings listed should do something to educate the public into understanding and appreciating how the buildings they see around them have come to be. It is a common complaint among those interested in architecture that, as Mr Colvin put it in the introduction to the first edition of his dictionary, "English architecture has so far been more than a small share of the interest and attention which has been so liberally bestowed on our poets and painters". This is far truer today than it was during the centuries covered in his book, when some knowledge of architecture was part of every educated man's intellectual equipment. Few today know the names of more than one or two architects, either of the past or of the present, and that is a pity.

In this same connection a particular problem that confronted Mr Colvin was that the age of railway engineering had not yet reached its terminal date. Again the pure engineers are not his concern. The architects who built for the railways are, and he duly includes Dobson's railway work at Newcastle, Hardwick's at Euston and Tit's at Salisbury, and the last, not least, Frankland's at Liverpool. Surprisingly, he altogether omits the name of Brunel, although the younger Brunel's Temple Meads Station at Bristol (1839) is an ambitious work of architecture in its own right and, as Colvin says, "one of the best examples of Victorian railway architecture".

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the King's World, who designed nothing, and Giuseppe Manocchi whom most people have rated as no more than one of the Adam brothers' draughtsmen. However, indulge in the game of querying inclusions and spotting omissions is an unprofitable way of reviewing any dictionary, and in reviewing one so comprehensive as Mr Colvin's, it is almost an impertinence. What needs insisting on, to those not already familiar with the book through the 1954 edition, is that it is very much more than a dictionary. It is exhaustively annotated. What needs insisting on, to those not already familiar with the book through the 1954 edition, is that it is very much more than a dictionary. It is exhaustively annotated. What needs insisting on, to those not already familiar with the book through the 1954 edition, is that it is very much more than a dictionary. It is exhaustively annotated.

The great value nevertheless of Mr Colvin's compilation lies less in his scholarly summaries of the lives and achievements of well-known architects than in the information he gives about architects that few have ever heard of. This is the fruit of many years of searching in the muniment rooms of remote country houses and among records and archives stored away in all parts of the country. In the preface to this new edition he acknowledges the help he has obtained, since the first edition was published, from the cataloguing of the drawings in the RIBA's possession and from the completion of the *Building of England*, but the research required by the task of revision—leaving aside this volume's expanded coverage—must still have been prodigious.

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The reluctant Liberator

By Esmond Wright

STEPHEN D. OATES:
With Malice Toward None
The Life of Abraham Lincoln
392pp. Allen and Unwin. £8.95

Stephen D. Oates tells us that it is seventeen years since the last biography of Lincoln was published. In saying this, he omits some recent short studies written in Britain. But if every generation needs to rewrite history in order to answer the questions posed by its own age, in doubt the case for a new major biography of Lincoln hardly requires justification. For in the past twenty years there has been the emergence of Black Consciousness and all that has gone with it, including political storms and assassinations in the cities, the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960s, and the end of segregation of blacks and of their restriction at the polls. There have been also the Watergate and Vietnam crises and the revised view of the Imperial Presidency they have occasioned. Where then stands the present reputation of the Liberator, President, who—in his own crisis—used executive authority on far more extensive a scale than did President Nixon?

Dr Oates tells the story of this perplexed and perplexing man in straightforward, unpretentious fashion. It is all here, without much name for analysis or assessment, and without any new revelations or discoveries. There is a considerable reference apparatus, with the sources of quotations piled in seventy pages at the end of the book; but missing is the assessment of sources that distinguished Benjamin Thomas's admirable one-volume biography of twenty-five years ago, still the best short survey.

Inevitably the war years and the end of segregation of blacks and the bloodshed of the struggle suffer from a purely biographical approach; the naval blockade, on which in the end the North's victory depended, is all but totally ignored. This appears, however, to fault what is, given the daunting

character of the subject and the immensity of the archive, a commendable biography. It is not written as a piece of *pietas*. There is no attempt to gloss over Lincoln's embarrassment at his own desperately poor origins and his striking neglect of his father—whom he refused to visit as he lay dying—and of his relatives once he made the move aged twenty-one, to New Salem. He was ashamed of his early poverty, of the rail-splitter image of the use of "Abe". He was all but totally self-taught, but was immensely strong, with his long arms and six-foot-four-inch frame; he was lank, awkward and ungainly, rustic in manner, glib and fluent. To some he was the "gorilla", to others the "habeon", "the ape of Illinois". His bleak ground makes the story of his climb up the greasy pole all but incredible.

Yet, despite the origins, Dr Oates establishes that, beginning early, there was a remarkable ambition in the man—it was "a little engine that knows no rest", as his law partner William Herndon called it—and he had no doubts that he could reach the Senate, if not the White House. Nor did he ever lose what he called the "hypo", or hypochondria, of his youth ("Melancholy dropped from him as he walked", said Herndon), the preoccupation with dreams of disaster, the expectation of death. This was a moody, morbid, ambitious and self-made—and yet substantially quite prosperous—lawyer who happened to be, politically, in a key state. He was always, despite his origins, a whig, a supporter of the rich man's party, of profits, tariffs and internal improvements; his political hero was Henry Clay.

Lincoln was also and always the thrumming politician, hesitating to go overboard for causes and with the shrewdness that marks the profession. He made mistakes, notably on the Mexican War, which, as a loyal white, he held to be necessary and unconstitutional. He had an inglorious term in Congress. At the age of forty-one, it seemed that his career could go no further than

a successful law practice on the Illinois circuit. Yet ten years later, the Black Republican, who had no administrative experience of any sort, was in the White House faced by the most anxious challenge since that which faced George Washington in 1775, and with no solutions for any of his problems. He had, in particular, no solution for the slavery problem at all.

If there are no special novelties or discoveries in the book, the character of the man is well portrayed, with his anxieties and complexes and dreams, his gaucherie with women and in particular his difficulties with his wife, who was herself a mass of complexes, alternating between being parsimonious and being extravagant and driven in the end to bouts of insanity. Lincoln carried this particular cross nobly. Dr Oates does not hide Mary Todd's vanity and imprudence, nor the fact that in the last two years the two seem to have lived far apart as did, in fact, the Lincoln family. Eleanor Roosevelt, she did little to help him, indeed caused him endless anguish.

The President was a very hesitant commander-in-chief. The decision to supply Sumter was agonising. There was no reliable headquarters staff, no high command, no war strategy. Lincoln was appalled by the early and costly defeats. He was driven to borrowing army manuals with a view to taking command himself. Dr Oates does not mention the distinguished scholar, the late J. G. Randall, who lent his high authority to a defence of McClellan. In this telling, McClellan, the would-be Bonaparte, surpasses Pugin in the art of delay, and is reduced to scotch and water. He was a man of command of an army intended for attack. In fact, Lincoln was much too patient with him—as with everyone else. Grant was the hero of the

war. Compared with the variety, flexibility and muscularity of the writing in the *History of the United States during the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison*, Adams's style had become over-ripe and too often in danger of slipping into the merely precious. More serious than this was the increasing rigidity of Adams's thought as he grew old. Inevitably, the rigidity of the antislavery element of his response to the depression of the 1890s. The polarities that dominate the late works—order-anarchy, unity-multiplicity, the dynamic and the Virgin—are not so much complex symbols as simply intellectual reductions by a man who, as he himself often said in these years, was desperately tired. Admittedly, the brilliance of his insights still remained, but he no longer had the mental or physical stamina to do the kind of great-grandfatherly thing that he had done in the past, trying to force phenomena into his own patterns of mind.

In spite of its subtitle (and its very indirectly allusive title) this book is not about Henry Adams and the Adams family, but about Henry Adams's use of the diaries, memoirs and letters of his father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Harbert characterizes the intellectual tradition of the family as an energetic pursuit of high ideals of public service, of duty, and of rigorous standards, informed by an optimistic but sceptical faith in a progress which could be achieved by the education of self and others. Harbert orders his material under the headings of politics, religion and philosophy, science, education, literature and art. Apart from being simplistic, this strategy is circular. The categories are primarily derived from the concerns of the *Education*, read back into the family papers, taken from there as evidence of intellectual continuity and influence within the family, and finally rediscovered in the *Education* via a discussion of Adams's earlier works.

Harbert's reading frequently consists of little more than juxtaposing fragments of Henry Adams with possible sources in the family papers, asserting the relationship rather than demonstrating it. The most blatant examples occur in his discussion of the *History*, whose hidden in this diary of John Quincy Adams. This refers to a cut-throat attack on Jefferson and Madison for adhering to states-

freed men in the Union and a white colonel) fought at the attack. There were, moreover, no revolts. Emancipation, reluctantly.

Dr Oates brings to the fore the complexity and the dilemmas of the Lincoln period. He was no abolitionist, no religious man, and no abolitionist. He was filled with religious doubt and devotion, and his music, poor and ill-chosen, and his friends could call him a gentleman to come out of it. At heart, and in the end, he was a sort of tactician, a man of craft, and a man, I think, to take on a bull-run at his right in the end.

He was plagued by doubt yet it was his will, his patience and his deep faith that sustained him. He had not caused the war, but he was South Carolina that seceded upon his election, his binding Constitution, and his military leader in the Spanish Civil War, and who has become absorbed into the mythology of the more romantic anarchism, a fate Godwin avoided. Durruti's actions showed that he believed, even if he did not say, that anarchism could be used to societies not yet industrialized, and they retained the simplicity of such societies in spite of the fact that neither rejected the possible benefits of technological improvement, nor the materialism of a plough being turned into a field, and left to do its work mechanically would have appealed to the hard-working people of the Andalusian upland pueblos.

There are other ways in which Durruti and the tradition he represents appear to be sharply different from the viewpoint Godwin occupies in *Political Justice* more than a century before Durruti was born. In 1896, for, as John P. Clark says in *The Philosophical Anarchism of William Godwin*:

Godwin... places himself in the liberal individualist tradition, opting for the individual person as the fundamental ontological reality with which social and political thought must deal. He takes a strong stand against the organic theory of society, exemplified in his own time by Burke and Rousseau, and later by the Hegelian tradition in political philosophy.

Among the anarchist teachers who wielded most influence in Spain, only the earliest, Pierre Joseph Proudhon (a greater influence on P. J. Margall's Federalists of the 1860s and 1870s than on the later avowed anarchists) regarded cooperation as an expedient Godwinian way—Kropotkin belonged in the organicist camp, and in fact argued that man was naturally social and freedom was meaning only in a social context; it was only when cooperation was replaced by the coercion of the state that liberty was imperilled. The anarchists in Spain—for reasons well in *The Spanish Anarchists*—were predisposed to accept the socially oriented type of anarchism represented by Bakunin's collectivism and Kropotkin's anarchism, though they combined the two doctrines with a form of intensely moralistic liberalism that was uniquely Spanish.

Finally, of course, it is arguable that even if there are certain basic similarities between what Godwin said in *Political Justice* and what Spain, there is no actual historical connection. There is no real evidence that any Continental anarchist before Kropotkin had read Godwin. Proudhon mentions him once in *Economic Contradictions*, but in such a way as to be a comma and a half. Bakunin seems to have been wholly ignorant of his English predecessor, and Kropotkin only read him after he had come into exile in England, when his life as a socialist was over and even then, in his *Modern Science and Socialism*, he merely lifted arguments from Godwin that supported his own well-established beliefs. I

POLITICS

MURRAY BOOKCHIN:

The Spanish Anarchists
144pp. Wildwood House, Free Life Editions. 17.95

JOHN P. CLARK:

The Philosophical Anarchism of William Godwin
313pp. Princeton University Press. £12.40

ABEL PAZ:

Durruti: The People Armed
Translated by Nancy Macdonald
323pp. Montreal: Black Rose Books. \$ Can 5.95

To think of William Godwin and of the nineteenth-century anarchist tradition is to touch the limits of the libertarian tradition, for it is hard to imagine two people more remote from each other in character and in daily life than the ex-Somersetshire farmer-in-law of Shelley whom Lamb described as "a slow man but a sure" with his intricate structure of logic expressed in a highly formal and latinized English, and the fiery, almost extraordinary series of guerrilla encounters with terrorism, who ended as a legendary military leader in the Spanish Civil War, and who has become absorbed into the mythology of the more romantic anarchism, a fate Godwin avoided. Durruti's actions showed that he believed, even if he did not say, that anarchism could be used to societies not yet industrialized, and they retained the simplicity of such societies in spite of the fact that neither rejected the possible benefits of technological improvement, nor the materialism of a plough being turned into a field, and left to do its work mechanically would have appealed to the hard-working people of the Andalusian upland pueblos.

I have always felt that this kind of affinity between attitudes is often as important as any probable link in the connection, and I believe that in 1896, for, as John P. Clark says in *The Philosophical Anarchism of William Godwin*:

Godwin... places himself in the liberal individualist tradition, opting for the individual person as the fundamental ontological reality with which social and political thought must deal. He takes a strong stand against the organic theory of society, exemplified in his own time by Burke and Rousseau, and later by the Hegelian tradition in political philosophy.

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The libertarian virtues

By George Woodcock

have met only one Spanish anarchist who read Godwin—also an exile in England and only because I introduced him to *Political Justice*—and there is no evidence whatever that the English strain of libertarianism (which ran directly from Godwin to Robert Owen and thence to later free socialists like William Morris and Edward Carpenter) influenced a single Spanish anarchist.

Yet there are, to say the least, haunting resemblances. The educational theories on which Francisco Ferrer based his Escuela Moderna, which served as model for many schools established by libertarian idealists in Catalonia (towns and Andalusian villages even before the Civil War), were perhaps less daring than those which Godwin set forth in *The Enquirer* in 1797, but they followed the same direction of an education in which the teacher would use as his guide the flowering of the student's desire for knowledge.

Godwin's aim of a simplified and austere society, where the tyranny of government and written laws would elude, where men would frankly discuss and arranged their affairs without the need for authority, and where true need was the criterion for the distribution of property, was also the ideal of the peasant anarchists who were the backbone of the more enduring source of Spanish militancy in the years before the Republic of 1931. Apart from anything else, Godwin and these Spanish anarchists both belonged to societies not yet industrialized, and they retained the simplicity of such societies in spite of the fact that neither rejected the possible benefits of technological improvement, nor the materialism of a plough being turned into a field, and left to do its work mechanically would have appealed to the hard-working people of the Andalusian upland pueblos.

Yes I keep coming back to the feeling that there does seem to be some affinity between attitudes is often as important as any probable link in the connection, and I believe that in 1896, for, as John P. Clark says in *The Philosophical Anarchism of William Godwin*:

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The anarchists have tended to find him compelling because, while his thorough rejection of government makes him seem a classic anarchist, his distrust of any kind of social organization puts him apart

from the teachings of mutual aid and cooperation which Kropotkin and his successors developed to pose a theoretical and practical alternative to authoritarian systems. Herbert Read is perhaps the only anarchist who made intensive use of Godwin's work, and then only of the sketch of a libertarian education developed in *The Enquirer*.

But if the anarchists have unduly neglected Godwin, as they have neglected Tolstoy, reasonably sympathetic non-libertarian discussions of his work have been rare indeed. H. N. Brailsford's *Shelley, Godwin and their Circle*, published as long ago as 1913, remains the most notable exception. Godwin's thinking has been unacceptable to conservatives, liberals and state socialists alike, and the apologists of such views have not set out to examine the discussion of Godwin's ideas by stressing the aspects of his life in which he is usually vulnerable to mockery, such as his eccentric domestic dealings and his inconsistencies as a father and a father-in-law.

In *The Philosophical Anarchism of William Godwin*, John P. Clark sets out to study Godwin's writings for what they say, without any preconceived ideological stance, and without dragging in biographical material of doubtful relevance. He examines the accusations of theoretical inconsistency that have been made against Godwin and shows that they are unfounded. He also shows that, emerging from nothing more than a careless reading. Yet at the same time he shows by a careful examination of the texts (including Godwin's lesser known works as well as *Political Justice*) how Godwin's position was in fact consistently weakened by his extreme individualism, which prevented him from supplementing a successfully destructive criticism of existing political systems, and of other imaginable political systems, with an equally convincing alternative social model based, as Kropotkin's would be, on the natural affinities that shape human and even animal relationships.

Mr Clark begins with a discussion of Godwin's philosophical bases, and argues that, even though the conclusions Godwin reaches are profoundly different from those of Jeremy Bentham, he still fits into the utilitarian tradition, with its stress on the greatest happiness of the greatest number. What he surprisingly fails to note in this context is Godwin's place in the English dissenting tradition, which always explains why he carried utilitarian arguments to a different conclusion than the authoritarian Bentham; if Godwin had not been bred a Sandemanian, with the extreme examples of that sect as his model, his individual judgment, with its stress on the greatest happiness of the greatest number, would have been the great protestant.

Another area of Godwin's thought which Mr Clark discusses is the great deal of insight into his necessary individualism—or determinism—as later thinkers would term it—that was always seemed as inconsistent in an advocate of the autonomy of individual judgment, which surely implies the freedom of choice. Godwin himself was obviously puzzled by this problem, for in his later writings he discussed at length the belief in a necessary connection between the individual and the social, and he goes so far as to grant that this illusion, as he still considers it, is a necessary determining factor.

Mr Clark proceeds from Godwin's philosophical premises to a examination of his political thinking, drawing on many of his works that have been ignored because they have never been collected or republished, and he shows by this process how Godwin's thought constantly evolved and amended itself for at least a quarter of a century, after the publication of *Political Justice*, so that what we have to consider is never in fact a static doctrine. Such an approach makes it easier for him, in his final chapter, to relate Godwin to the later anarchism whose teachings he moved progressively away from the extreme individualism which flawed Godwin's arguments. I have read no account of Godwin's teachings that does as much justice to them while remaining so scholarly, critical, or that so clearly relates them to the anarchist tradition without assuming, until recent times, any historical link.

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Spain. They acted strictly on the Robin Hood principle, keeping only enough of the proceeds of their robberies to live, sparingly, and giving the rest to the cause, so that children's home in Spain was left going by stolen funds, and even Sebastian Faure's *Enciclopedia Anarquista* was edited by Durruti and his comrades.

Durruti was one of the founders of the FAI—the Iberian Anarchist Federation—and he was also one of the most conscious of the necessity of connection with the CNT—the syndicalist trade-union movement with its built-in inclination towards centralization. When the Spanish generally pronounced in 1936, Durruti was one of the organizers of the urban guerrilla campaign in which the Barcelona workers defeated the military insurgents; if there had been a few more Durrutis in Spain it is likely that Franco's rebellion would never have been more than an abortive push.

The defeat of the generals in Barcelona—though it did not seem so at the time—was the high point of anarchist fortunes in Spain. The advantage was lost because, paradoxically, the anarchists held the keys to a power which their principles had taught them to reject and which they did not know how to wield or to abandon. A series of compromises compromised the anarchists' political parties to form the Central Committee of the Militias and later their leaders as ministers into the Republican government. Durruti was clearheaded enough to reject such compromises. He led the famous column named after him to the Saragossa front and later,

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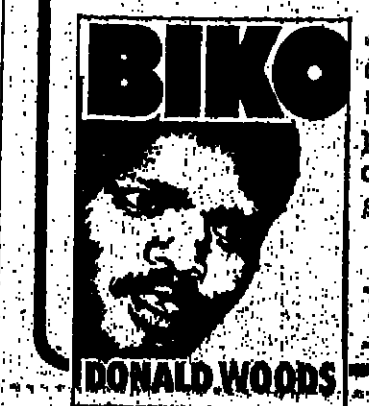
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